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A TEACHER-TRAINING EXPERIMENT EVOLVED BY THE SCHOOL AUTHORITIES OF LIMA, OHIO

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Superintendent of Schools

A plan has been evolved at Lima, Ohio, for the special training of elementary teachers for the city schools, which has been in practical operation under my personal supervision for more than eight years. By this plan the preparing of young and inexperienced teachers for their work in the primary grades is carried on successfully without any additional cost to the city. Two separate rooms in the Garfield Building, containing the second and third grades respectively, are under the direct personal supervision of a special instructor who receives the combined salaries of the two grades and acts as training teacher.

Since the beginning of the present school administration at Lima, nearly nine years ago, from eight to twelve apprentice teachers have been selected from the training class each year, the requirements for admission being as follows: (1) The applicant must be a graduate of the Lima High School, or of some other school of equal rank with that of Lima, or have had an education equal to the four-year course given in Lima High School. (2) The applicant must have passed satisfactorily the Lima city teachers' examination for an elementary certificate. (3) The applicant must be appointed to membership in the training school by the Superintendent of Schools and the appointment must be regularly confirmed by the board of education.

The training course is one year in length. During this time each student spends at least two months in each of the two grades, one month as assistant, and one month in actual practice teaching. The assistant must observe the teaching of the training teacher, assist in directing seat work, and become familiar with all reports required by the superintendent and with the ordinary routine of the

classroom. After the student-teacher has mastered these requirements so that she feels free in the presence of the class, she begins to teach under the close supervision of the training teacher. Outlines of every lesson given must be prepared at first with the direct help of the training teacher, but later without assistance. These lesson plans are always carefully criticized before they are used in the class. After the lesson is given, the training teacher indicates the causes of success or failure, placing special emphasis on all the good points, thus giving all the encouragement that may be necessary in order to secure the best results.

When the student-teacher is not engaged in teaching or assisting, she is required to spend her time in observing the work of some of the best teachers in the city. She spends two or three days with the same teacher, writing out in full a lesson plan of each branch taught in that grade. The training teacher reads all these plans, discusses them in class, and answers such questions as the training class may ask regarding the work observed.

One hour each day is given to class recitation in the training school throughout the entire year. During the year, thirty-five hours are given to psychology, forty hours to school management, twenty hours to the history of education, thirty-five hours to public-school music, and the remaining time, about fifty-five hours, to lectures and discussions by the training teacher on methods of teaching the various subjects in the first four grades.

The two classrooms under the supervision of the training teacher are adjacent, so that the work of the apprentice-teachers can be easily observed and, if not well done, corrected before any harm is done to the children in the school.

After completing the year's work in the training school, the apprentice-teachers are appointed by the superintendent to regular and substitute positions in the instruction corps, according to the degree of proficiency shown in the training class and attested by the results of the city teachers' examination.

In my judgment this experiment may be regarded as having been very successful in this city. The children are taught fully as well in the training school as in other rooms of the same grades throughout the city. In fact, better results are often secured there than else-

where, so far as the children are concerned. In the course of my term as superintendent, I have had the opportunity to try out a number of groups as regular teachers, made up of those who had served the apprenticeship in the training school. I have discerned in my regular visits of inspection to the schools under their charge ample evidence in their teaching that they have profited largely by that apprenticeship. We are greatly pleased with the results of the experiment and intend to continue the plan.